

Comment: RM-10352
Date: February 7, 2002
FM: Tom Mackie W2ILA

Respectfully submitted to the Commissioners:

As an accomplished CW operator and former professional shipboard Radio Officer in the U.S. Merchant Marine, I initially welcomed the above referenced petition. However, after personal research and analysis of the data and arguments presented, I must voice my strong opposition to the proposed rulemaking.

By way of background, I operate primarily CW and actively pursue diverse aspects within the Amateur Radio hobby. These include DXing, classic radio restoration, QRO and QRP experimentation, CW ragchewing and antenna design. My amateur radio hobby led to a career as a radio operator; a profession now obsolete. While the shipboard CW operator of the past is now a historic footnote, CW continues to be a favored mode in my "shack". However, more important than the survival of CW is the survival and advancement of Amateur Radio as a hobby and national resource.

Mister Tippet and Mr. Briggs presented compelling data for their proposal. However, further analysis shows their data as flawed and misleading. It is important that this be considered and further researched when reviewing the proposal. Please review Appendix 3 within the Petition (Supporting Data Evidencing Growth in Utilization of 160M). Note that most data presented is in reference to "contests". Contests, while a valid pursuit within the radio hobby, are not valid for use as a measure of *normal* spectrum activity. To the contrary, contests bring together many operators who rarely otherwise are on the air. Their one and two day excursions into the ether are special occasions for operation. Additionally, the technology of contesting with highly advanced equipment including automatic logging, calling, PC controlled radios and internet spectrum review have all advanced the "art" of contesting. Scores that had never been imagined in the days of "dipping the plate" are now common with modern equipment and tools. Do the high scores outlined in the petition indicate **growth**? The answer is clearly NO. They simply indicate increased operating efficiency. The same is true when considering the "Overseas Dxpedition" contacts argument (ref. appendix 3). Strong advertising of Dxpeditions as well as internet exploits allowing real-time "heads up" DX information simply invites more contacts.

I invite the commission to do their own "market research" and hence avoid the Enron syndrome of decision making based upon faulty information. I have been

listening to the lower end of 160 meters for CW activity almost daily for the past 3 years. From practical experience I know there are one to six CW QSO's in progress on any given evening hour. There are many nights when the only CW signal on the band is W1AW sending code practice! While I cannot provide years of log information, the commission's practical research will find this information accurate. There is one exception to the typical; **Contests. It is not uncommon for contest CW operators to occupy the band from 1800-1910kHz.**

Given 160 is considered the "gentleman's" band, there is rarely a conflict during the chaos riddled weekends of CW contests. Most phone ops simply do not operate. If the proposed rulemaking were passed into law, it is fact that the lower end of 160 meters would be vacant for all days of the year except those when a contest is underway. The disuse could spell the end of 160 meters if the international Broadcast industry chooses to expand their, already overcrowded, spectrum. This selfish petition for contest oriented operators could spell the end of the 160 meter resource. I urge the FCC to reject the petition.

Lastly, I cannot help but take the IARU recommendation into account:

IARU Administrative Council resolution regarding code examinations:

Considering

The approval without opposition if ITU-R Recommendation M. 1544, which sets out the minimum qualifications of radio amateurs.

Recognizing

That the Morse code continues to be an effective and efficient mode of communication used by many thousands of radio amateurs but

Further recognizing

That the position of Morse as a qualifying criterion for an HF amateur license is no longer relevant to the healthy future of amateur radio.

Resolves that

Member societies are urged to seek, as an interim measure, Morse code testing speeds not exceeding five words per minute:

Setting aside any previous relevant decisions

IARU policy is to support the removal of Morse code testing as an ITU requirement for an amateur license to operate on frequencies below 30MHz.

Gentlemen, with all due respect, it would be inappropriate to consider dedicating almost 25% of the 160 meter resource to a mode that is internationally recognized as being in decline. I urge you to reject the petition and allow the spectrum to continue with its successful "self policing" policy.

I sincerely appreciate your considering my opposition to RM-10352.

Best Regards,

Tom Mackie W2ILA